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ABSTRACT

The relationship between the federal German state ("Bund" or Federation) to the 16 constituent states known as Laender is explored in this document. The first part explains the federal structure; it contains the following sections: (1) Unity in Diversity; (2) Distribution of Responsibility; (3) Legislative Powers; (4) Administration-Mainly the Responsibility of the States; (5) Administration of Justice--Federal and State Jurisdiction; (6) The Financial System; (7) The Bundesrat--The Federal Legislative Body; (8) External Representation; and (9) Summary and Outlook. The document's second part provides a description of each of the 16 constituent states--Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bavaria, Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Hesse, Mecklenberg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony, North-Rhine/Westphalia, Rhineland/Palatinate, Saarland, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein, and Thurngia. Descriptions mention the history, geography, economy, and overall identity of each state in relation to the republic. (DB)

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SIXTEEN STATES, ONE COUNTRY

The political structure of the Federal Republic of Germany

by Dr Konrad Reuter

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Contents

		Page
A.	Federal Structure	1
1.	Unity in diversity	1
2.	Distribution of responsibility	2
3.	Legislative powers	2
	Federal legislation	2
	State legislation	3
4.	Administration - mainly the responsibility of the states	4
	Federal administration	4
	State administration	4
5.	Administration of justice - federal and state jurisdiction	5
6.	The financial system	6
	Distribution of burdens	6
	Distribution of taxes	7
	Financial equalization	8
	Transitional arrangements for the new states	8
7.	The Bundesrat - the federal legislative body	9
	Composition	9
	Functions	9
	Federal significance	11
8.	External representation	11
9.	Summary and outlook	12

B. The Constituent States	Page
Baden-Wuerttemberg	13
Bavaria	15
Berlin	17
Brandenburg	19
Bremen	21
Hamburg	23
Hesse	25
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	27
Lower Saxony	29
North-Rhine/Westphalia	31
Rhineland-Palatinate	33
Saarland	35
Saxony	37
Saxony-Anhalt	41
Schleswig-Holstein	43
Thuringia	45

A. Federal Structure

1. Unity in diversity

(INP). - The citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany are Hessians or Bavarians or Saxons - but they are all Germans. That is the nature of a federal state: the body politic as a whole (Bund or Federation) is made up of constituent states known as Laender. Neither the Federation nor the Laender can act of their own accord. It is their interaction at federal and state level that is the essence of the state as a whole. Under constitutional law the Federation consists of states which, while being subject to its authority, are also involved in the formation of public policy.

Germany always had a decentralized structure until its catastrophic experience with centralism in the form of the National Socialist dictatorship from 1933 to 1945. There was no excessively powerful central authority able to govern the affairs of distant provinces. The delegation of political authority to the regions is part of the legacy of German constitutional history. In Germany the federal state was a combination of the national element with the particularistic elements of autonomous regions. It established national unity but at the same time created internal borders which were an obstacle to the overenthusiastic pursuit of unity.

The Parliamentary Council, a body elected by the parliaments of the 11 states, adopted the Basic Law (constitution) for the newly created Federal Republic in 1949. It thus reestablished and codified, both from experience and conviction, the country's federal tradition. The other part of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, was likewise initially a federal state under its first constitution of 1949. But in 1952 the five states were replaced by 14 administrative districts, so that the federal structure, which had in any case only existed on paper, was abolished altogether. In the course of the revolutionary developments of 1989, however, the restoration of the five former states in East Germany was demanded right from the beginning. Those states - Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia - became constituent states of Germany when the country was united on 3 October 1990. Thus unification has maintained the principle of both

(1)

national unity and federal diversity. As a result both unity and diversity have acquired a larger dimension in Germany, which remains "the Federal Republic of Germany" as established by the Basic Law.

2. Distribution of responsibility

In a federation, power and responsibility are divided between the central organs and the states. In addition to the classical "horizontal" division (legislative, executive, judicature) there is a "vertical" division as between the country as a whole and its constituent parts. Powers are therefore separated in a twofold sense, so that not only the federation but each state has a parliament, a government, and courts of law.

Each state has its distinctive features depending on the nature and extent of responsibility-sharing. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany did not apportion responsibility en bloc according to subject-matter but took into account the political functions of the Federation and the states. Generally speaking, legislation is for the most part the responsibility of the Federation whilst administration falls within the sphere of competence of the states. The legal system embraces both the Federation and the states. This political structure places the Federation in a strong position because with its comprehensive legislative authority it can establish standard rules for all the states and all the people. The states, however, have an important compensatory function in that they have a say in federal legislation through the Bundesrat (the Council of States which is the second legislative body). Federal bills that affect the states in a particular way can only pass into law with the explicit consent of the Bundesrat.

3. Legislative powers

Federal legislation

The Basic Law has established two categories of federal legislation. Certain matters that require national laws in the interest of the community as a whole are the exclusive domain of the Federation. They include, for instance, foreign affairs, defence, nationality questions, currency, weights

and measures, posts and telecommunications, customs and border protection. But there are a number of fields for which both the Federation and the states may legislate. This is known as "concurrent" legislation. The Federation has priority, however, and the states may only legislate if and to the extent that the federal parliament has not already covered the same ground. In fact, the Federation has exercised this priority to such a degree that the states have practically no room to legislate concurrently. The areas affected include criminal and procedural law, assembly and association, commercial and labour law, transport and housing.

In some areas such as higher education, the media and films, nature conservation, landscape management, regional planning, water economy, personal registration, identity cards and passports, the Federation's scope is limited. It may only establish the framework; the states provide the substance themselves. The Regional Planning Act, for instance, contains only general rules and it is up to each state to implement structural plans which suit its economic, social and cultural circumstances.

State legislation

The states can legislate where the Federation has no constitutional authority to do so. This may seem as if the states have considerable legislative scope which is only limited by the Federation's own law-making rights, but the constitution allows otherwise. From the Federal Republic's inception in 1949 the Federation was given responsibility for nearly all important areas of legislation, and its range of competence has been widened further still as a result of various amendments to the constitution. At the present time the states still have almost exclusive legislative competence for cultural affairs, especially schools and higher education, radio and television, communal affairs which cover the organization of towns, cities and rural districts, and general police organization.

This means that in these areas the states are quite at liberty to pursue their own objectives. This can produce competition and diversity, especially in the cultural field, but it does not rule out supraregional coordination. The Laender are individually responsible for police matters but they have all agreed that, for instance, police officers nationwide should wear

the same uniform. There are still quite considerable differences as regards school systems but the ministers of education of the states are constantly striving to achieve uniformity where this is considered meaningful by all. In these areas, however, no state can be forced to comply with a decision of the Federal Government or a majority decision of the other states. Nor does state authority mean that geographical limitations apply in all cases. Although the states have exclusive responsibility for television, for instance, they have cooperative arrangements whereby some programmes are broadcast nationwide.

Although restricted by the Federation's framework-setting competence, the states also have considerable legislative scope for regional planning, nature conservation, landscape management, and water economy.

The state parliaments are of course individually responsible for their regional budgets. Each state can itself decide how to dispose of its income. Its scope for action, like that of the Federation, is less than ten per cent, however, because statutory commitments must first be financed before any new priorities can be established.

4. Administration - mainly the responsibility of the states

Federal administration

The architects of the Basic Law wanted to avoid setting up huge central authorities that would take decisions affecting people in far-away places. They therefore placed public administration for the most part in the hands of the states. Only in a few cases are federal authorities responsible for the implementation of legislation. This responsibility extends mainly to the Foreign Service, railways, posts and telecommunications, federal fiscal administration, the Federal Armed Forces, the Federal Border Guard, and labour placement.

State administration

Most administrative authority is delegated to the states, their districts and various local authorities. Hence the states implement not only their own

legislation but also that of the Federation. When giving effect to federal laws they act either "on behalf of the Federation" or "on their own behalf". They are agents of the Federation, so to speak, in such fields as motorways, highways and waterways, air transport (licensing of airports), nuclear energy (licensing of nuclear power plants and facilities for the storage or reprocessing of radioactive substances). In such instances the Federal Government can issue instructions of the state authorities.

Most federal laws are implemented by the state authorities. This leaves the Federal Government with less influence than in the case of laws implemented strictly on behalf of the Federation. The Federal Government's supervisory function applies only to the legality of state administrative decisions, not to their expediency. Where a law may be implemented in several legitimate ways, the state has a choice and the Federal Government may not revoke its decision on the ground that one of the other possibilities would have been better, "more expedient". Thus the states are not merely executive organs but can give consideration to their own views and make genuine decisions. This applies in particular to laws covering building, social assistance, trade and industry, indeed to most federal laws.

State laws are always implemented by the state authorities, not by federal agencies. This is not exclusively a matter of applying individual regulations but also reflects the state's role in the development of the community as manifest in its service-providing administration. In this process it is responsible for the building of new schools, universities, theatres and museums, but also for the public financing of industry location, structural policy and town planning. Thus administration in this broadest sense of government activity, as distinct from the legislative role of parliament, is not merely a subordinate, executive function. The states play an active, important part in the political process.

5. Administration of justice - federal and state jurisdiction

In the third branch of public authority, the administration of justice, the jurisdiction of the Federation and the states is intermingled to a greater extent than in the case of legislation and administration. There is an interrelated system of court procedure in that trials are begun in state

courts and can end with appeals being lodged with federal courts. If a federal court finds that the ruling of a state court contains an error in law it may overrule that court's decision. This ensures the uniform administration of justice throughout the country.

6. The financial system

Distribution of burdens

Most of the principles and rules underlying the division of responsibilities as between the Federation and the states would have no real meaning if the financial aspects were not regulated. What would be the point of the states having responsibility for road construction if they didn't have the money to finance it? Thus the laws governing cost-sharing are the main supports of the federal structure and a constant subject of negotiation between the Federation and the states. The Basic Law divided these fiscal responsibilities as follows:

Administrative costs (staff, premises, equipment, etc.) necessary to maintain the machinery of government must be borne, in the case of federal authorities by the Federal Government, in the case of state authorities by the state government.

Material expenditure is borne by whoever holds administrative (not legislative) responsibility. If that responsibility lies exclusively with the Federation then it must provide the funds, and similarly with the states. Where a state is only "acting on behalf of the Federation" the latter has the last word and must therefore foot the bill. For instance, the Federal Government has to pay for motorways which are built by the states on its behalf. It also has to meet the cost of the Federal Armed Forces, which fall exclusively within its jurisdiction. Schools, on the other hand, are the responsibility of the states (more precisely the local authorities) and therefore have to be financed by them. But the states also have to finance expenditure resulting from federal laws which they are required to apply "on their own behalf", as for instance the Federal Social Assistance Act, the Prisons Act or federal environmental laws relating to air and water pollution and noise abatement.

In the case of federal "cash" laws, in other words those which involve payments to citizens, the Federal Government may have to meet all or part of the costs incurred by the states. In the case of students' grants, for instance, the Federation has to reimburse the states for part of the cost because the Training Promotion Act is a federal law. Where the states have to meet at least one quarter of the cost the law in question must have the approval of the Bundesrat.

Distribution of taxes

Under the Basic Law, nearly all tax laws are enacted by the Federation. The big advantage of this uniformity is that the tax burden is practically the same throughout the country. This prevents distortion of competition and ensures that no state can offer tax incentives to the detriment of the others. The states are not necessarily at a disadvantage financially because although the Federation has exclusive legislative competence it does not have an exclusive right to revenue. In fact, the Federation and the states have "equal claims" on the national income. Their requirements have to be balanced in such a way that revenue can be fairly divided, the taxpayer is not overburdened, and uniform living standards are maintained throughout the country.

Tax revenue is divided between the Federal Government on the one hand and the states on the other on the basis of two different systems. Most kinds of tax are allocated exclusively to either the Federal Government or the states, but the most important ones, accounting for about 70 per cent of total revenue, are shared on a "pool" basis. This is the nucleus of the Federal Republic's fiscal system and involves three taxes: income tax, corporation tax, and turnover tax. In the case of the first two, the constitution prescribes quotas for the Federal Government and the states. In the case of the turnover or value-added tax, no quotas have been fixed and adjustments have to be made from time to time. The federal budget for 1989, for instance, i.e. prior to the unification of Germany, totalled about DM 292 billion, that of all the states together DM 280 billion. In addition, the expenditure of the local authorities came to DM 193 billion, which is financed from their share of income tax, local rates, and allocations from the state.

Financial equalization

But the constitutional provisions governing public finance must not only ensure that tax revenue is divided fairly between the Federation and the states but also determine how the entitlement of the latter is shared among them. Basically, each state keeps the taxes levied in its own territory, on the principle that each should have the taxes resulting from its economic strength and the structure of its industry. But here there are considerable disparities. There are "poor" and "wealthy" states. Consequently, the constitution requires the financial resources of the states to be "reasonably balanced". There is no attempt to level state revenue entirely because then the better-off states would have no motive for maintaining their advantage, and their poorer neighbours no incentive for expanding their industries. A very complicated method of calculation is used, but in the end equalization payments raise the income of the poorer states to about 95 per cent of the average national per-capita tax revenue.

Transitional arrangements for the new states

The fiscal provisions of the Basic Law could not automatically be applied to the new federal states on account of their totally different situation. The Unification Treaty therefore contains special arrangements with regard to the financial requirements of these regions.

First, the Federation and the eleven "old states" set up in connection with the establishment of a monetary, economic and social union a "German Unity Fund" totalling DM 115 billion. This money will be used between 1990 and 1994 to finance the transition to a social market economy and will cover infrastructure, industry, agriculture and measures to improve general living conditions. 85 per cent of the funds are being distributed among the new federal states and Berlin according to the size of their population in order to meet their general financial requirements. The remaining 15 per cent is earmarked for central public expenditure in the regions. Although the constitution's fiscal provisions with regard to financial burdens and tax distribution also apply to the new states, exceptional rules have been introduced with regard to distribution of turn-

over tax, financial equalization among the states, and the financial requirements of local authorities.

7. The Bundesrat - the federal legislative body

The activities of the states are not confined to their own territories. Being constituent states of the Federation they can exercise influence on the country as a whole. Their mouthpiece for this purpose, given to them by the constitution, is the Bundesrat. Article 50 of the Basic Law gives the Bundesrat a say in federal legislation and administration.

Composition

As the name implies, the Bundesrat (Federal Council) consists of representatives of the state governments. Thus its members have a dual function, a state one and a federal one. They are state politicians and federal politicians. The number of representatives differs. Each state has at least three votes. Those with more than two million inhabitants have four, those with more than six million five, and those with more than seven million six.

Since the members of the Bundesrat are appointed by the state governments there are no elections for the Bundesrat and therefore no legislative terms. In constitutional terms it is a "permanent body", the composition of which changes from time to time as a result of changes in state governments following regional elections. The votes of each state must be cast en bloc (i.e. they must all be either yes, no, or abstention), thus reflecting the intentions of the state and not of the individual members of the Bundesrat. Members are therefore bound by their state government's decisions when casting their votes.

Functions

The Bundesrat's main functions are bound up with its role in the legislative process. It can submit bills to the Bundestag, the other house of parliament which is elected directly by the people. When introducing legislation the Federal Government must first submit the bill to the

Bundesrat for its comments. However, the Bundesrat performs its main legislative function when it debates bills that have already passed through the Bundestag. This is because bills which specifically affect the interests of the states may not become law without its consent. This applies to bills proposing amendments to the constitution (requiring a two-thirds majority of the Bundesrat), to bills concerning the revenue of the states (principally those relating to taxes in which the states or local authorities have a share), and to bills affecting the administrative powers of the states, such as those which prescribe the use of specific forms or fix time limits and administrative charges, or the establishment of new public authorities. Owing to such provisions, bills may require the consent of the Bundesrat which basically do not affect state interests, as in the case of international treaties or matters of national defence.

The constitutional status and significance of the Bundesrat ensue mainly from its involvement in the legislative process. The consent requirement gives it, and hence the states, considerable influence on federal legislation because about half of all federal legislation consists of "consent" laws. Thus in one out of every two laws the Bundestag cannot decide alone but must take account of the views of the Bundesrat. This is of major political significance where majority voting in the one legislative body is not reflected in the other.

The Laender (states), through the Bundesrat, are also involved in legislation that does not require consent. Such laws are known as "objection bills". In these cases, however, the Bundesrat can merely express its reservations, which can be overruled by the Bundestag with an absolute majority. The bill can then be signed into law and promulgated despite the Bundesrat's disapproval.

The Bundesrat also has a controlling function in respect of Federal Government administration. Under the Basic Law the Federal Government is obliged to keep the Bundesrat informed on the "management of current business". This applies not only to legislation and administration but to all government activity, including the general political situation, foreign and defence policy. The members of the Bundesrat are also entitled to attend

all meetings of the Bundestag and its committees and they must be given a hearing there at any time.

Federal significance

The Federal Government and the states are required to keep a check on one another's activities, but they must at the same time be cooperative. Thus in this interaction the Bundesrat is a counterbalance to the Bundestag and the Federal Government, but it at the same time acts as a link between the Federation and the states in that it is a channel through which they can focus Federal Government attention on their interests. It involves the Laender in the federal law-making process, thus giving them some compensation for the extensive loss of their own law-making powers. It brings the political and administrative experience of the states into the legislative and administrative processes of the Federal Government to the benefit of all and gives them a share of the responsibility for the political acts or omissions of the country as a whole.

Being a political organ, the Bundesrat is of course also subject to party influence. Thus in the Bundesrat there is an interaction of federal and party political elements reflecting the political situation in the individual states. Conversely, party politics are influenced by the party associations in the individual states and thus themselves to some extent of a "federal" nature.

8. External representation

Under the constitution, the country's external relations are the responsibility of the Federation, which maintains a Foreign Service (embassies, consulates and other missions) for this purpose. However, the federal states are not totally excluded from the cultivation of relations with other countries.

Before the Federal Government concludes international agreements which affect any of the federal states it must inform the state concerned in good time. Although it does not have to seek the state's approval, it must consult it. With respect to treaties concerning maritime transport, for

instance, the Federal Government must hear the views of the coastal states, and in matters concerning the Rhine the riparian states.

Furthermore, any federal state may conclude treaties with other countries where the subject of the treaty falls within the legislative competence of the states. Such agreements are subject to approval by the Federal Government, however, which has to decide whether the treaty in question is consistent with national foreign policy. Agreements of this kind usually relate to cultural affairs and education (science, research, schools). The states are also involved in the country's foreign relations via the Bundesrat.

In addition, the states' involvement in matters of foreign policy is also manifest in the European Community, where they have an official observer who is a member of the German delegation to the Council of Ministers. Individual German states also maintain offices in Brussels which are responsible for the exchange of information, especially on economic matters. Since 1986 the Federal Government has also been required to cooperate closely with the Bundesrat and the states on European Community laws or agreements which "wholly or in respect of individual provisions relate to matters which lie exclusively within the legislative competence of the federal states or affect their basic interests".

9. Summary and outlook

Federalism is conducive to two important elements of the political process: competition and the search for compromise. This, too, is a reason for the prosperity and political stability of the Federal Republic of Germany. Many citizens can involve themselves in the political life of the nation, whether at federal or at state level. The Federal Republic of Germany is one political entity, but with its federal states it is also more. It represents unity in diversity. This federal structure also provides a good foundation for the new tasks arising in united Germany. Government, society and industry must again be harmonized throughout the country. The principle of unity in diversity implies for both the Federation and the Laender that, notwithstanding regional autonomy, they must cooperate with one another in establishing equal living conditions in all parts of Germany. In this way federalism will continue to have a decisive influence on cultural, economic and political life in Germany.

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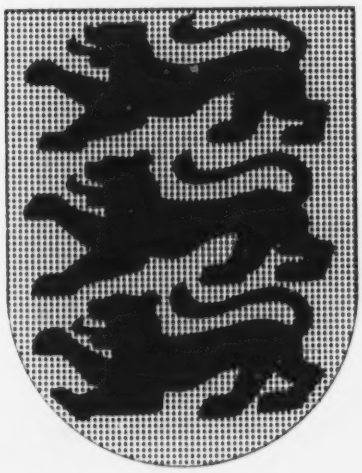
B. The Constituent States

Baden-Wuerttemberg



The state of Baden-Wuerttemberg came into being in 1952 following a referendum in three south-western states that had been formed in 1945. With an area of 35,752 square kilometres and a population of 9.5 million, it is in both size and population the third largest federal state. It is divided into four counties, 12 regional associations, 35 rural districts, nine county boroughs and about 1,100 local authorities. Cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants are the capital Stuttgart (560,100), Mannheim (298,800), Karlsruhe (263,100), Freiburg-im-Breisgau (182,000), Heidelberg (129,600), Heilbronn (111,900), Pforzheim (108,400) and Ulm (105,400).

The main industrial concentration is in the river Neckar area embracing Stuttgart, Esslingen and Plochingen (automobiles, mechanical engineering, electronics, chemicals). Baden-Wuerttemberg also produces furniture, textiles, musical instruments, shoes, surgical instruments and optical equipment.

Typical of the area are the small and medium-sized farms, many specializing in wine growing, tobacco, fruit, asparagus, hops and vegetables. The dominant topographical feature of this central upland area are the forests, which account for two thirds of the whole state and bear such famous names as Black Forest, Odenwald, Swabian-Franconian Forest and the Alb.

With its famous universities of Heidelberg (founded in 1386), Freiburg (1457) and Tuebingen (1477), the south-west region of Germany has always been famous for its culture and history well beyond the state's boundaries. It is proud of its long-standing democratic traditions which have their roots in

both its Baden and its Wuerttemberg area. Their constitutions of 1818 and 1819 respectively were the most liberal of all the German regional constitutions of that time. One of the intellectual pioneers of this liberal tradition was Wuerttemberg's most famous son Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805). Baden-Wuerttemberg maintains good relations with neighbouring Switzerland in the south and France across the Rhine in the west.

Stuttgart is proud of the fact that the state's productivity and financial resources are above the national average. Indeed, it has the biggest industrial growth rate in the country. Some of its products are household names the world over, such as the cars of Daimler Benz (Mercedes).

Bavaria

Bavaria's sense of national identity stems from the fact that this region has been a political and cultural entity for a thousand years. Bavaria is the only state in the Federal Republic of Germany to have retained its old borders after the collapse of the German Reich in 1945. The name "Free State of Bavaria" seems to give that much more emphasis to the region's autonomy, although it really only stands for "republic of Bavaria".

With an area of 70,552 square kilometres, Bavaria is the largest state in the Federal Republic. Its population of 11.2 million can be divided into three main groups which differ according to dialect, mentality and affinity. There are the old Bavarians in the south and east, the Franconians in the north, and the Bavarian Swabians in the southwest. In the postwar years there was a considerable influx of refugees from the German eastern territories, including Sudeten Germans, the largest group among them in Bavaria. There are seven counties, 25 county boroughs and 71 rural districts with some 2,000 local authorities. Strongly federalist in outlook, Bavaria takes a very centralistic view within its own borders, with the capital, Munich (1.3 million inhabitants), being the focal point. Other major cities are Nuremberg (477,000), Augsburg (245,600), Regensburg (118,700), Wuerzburg (125,000) and Erlangen (100,000).

In terms of its constitutional structure Bavaria differs from the other federal states in that, in addition to the Landtag or state parliament, the composition of which depends on the strength of the parties for which the regional electorate have voted, there is a second legislative body known as the Senate. The Senate is made up of representatives of the state's various social, business and cultural organizations, and of the local authorities. It performs an advisory function in the law-making process.

In former times Bavaria was a predominantly agricultural region, but nowadays farming and forestry account for only about 3 per cent of its gross domestic product. Industry has advanced rapidly since the Second World War, with the result that Bavaria is now home to aerospace companies, oil refineries and large petrochemical plants. Munich the capital, whose population since the war has grown beyond the million mark and which is sometimes referred to as "Germany's secret capital", is the state's cultural and business centre. Whereas in the old days it was the famous breweries which gave the city its profile, it is now the car, electronics, textile and chemical industries on the fringe of the metropolis. Munich, host to the 1972 Olympic Games, has become a leading fashion centre, especially for sportswear. Another important economic factor is tourism. Large parts of Bavaria, especially the alpine resorts, have become the country's most popular recreational area.

Berlin

On 3 October 1990, the day on which Germany was united, Berlin ceased to be a divided city and became, without reservation, a fully fledged state of the Federal Republic of Germany. It covers an area of 883 square kilometres and, with a population of 3.41 million, is easily Germany's largest city. It is divided into 23 self-governing counties. Its parliament is called the House of Representatives, its government the Senate, which is headed by the Governing Mayor of Berlin.

In 1945 the former capital of the German Reich was divided into four sectors, each governed by one of the four occupying powers. However, the gulf between the Western allies and the Soviet Union continued to widen and culminated in 1948 in the Soviet blockade of the Western sectors and thus the city's division into East and West. Whereas the Western sectors could be integrated into the Federal Republic of Germany with restricted rights under the aegis of the allies, the Eastern part of Berlin became de facto the capital of the German Democratic Republic. The Berlin crisis engineered by the Soviet Union in 1958, and the building of the wall on 13 August 1961, represent the height of the threat to West Berlin and the cementing of the city's division. The thaw in East-West relations which begun in the early 70s also had a favourable impact on the Berlin situation. The Quadripartite Agreement of 3 September 1971 resulted in various improvements, especially with regard to travel for West Berliners and West Berlin's incorporation in the Federal Republic's treaties with Eastern Europe.

The revolutionary events in East Germany in 1989 led to the opening of the wall on 9 November of that year and, as a result of the Unification Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, the merging of the two parts of Berlin with effect from 3 October 1990.

Berlin had in former times become the residence of the Brandenburg-Prussian monarchy. Its original districts of Kölln and Berlin were first mentioned in official documents in 1137 and 1244 respectively. In the 17th century Berlin opened its doors to people from France, Bohemia and other regions who were persecuted on religious grounds and thus proved itself to be a centre of tolerance and of artistic and scientific freedom. The city's cultural significance was augmented by vigorous economic growth in the 19th century. With the founding of the empire in 1871 Berlin became the capital and one of Europe's major capitals. Henceforth, up to 1945, it was indisputably the main focal point of art, science and politics in Germany. It was also the principal industrial city (engineering, electronics, optical instruments, food and tobacco), not only in Germany but in the whole of Europe. Berlin was also home to the banking and financial world, wholesale trade, and the newspaper and film industries.

The city-state of Berlin now has a twofold task. It must improve living conditions in the eastern counties and gradually remove the whole city's financial dependence on the Federal Government resulting from the city's division and West Berlin's insular situation, all of which placed the city at a disadvantage compared with other parts of West Germany.

Brandenburg

The "March of Brandenburg" was once described as "the sand-box of the Holy Roman Empire" on account of its sandy soil. It nevertheless became the central region of the later kingdom of Prussia.

Today this federal state covers an area of some 29,000 square kilometres and has a population of 2.6 million. The state capital is Potsdam (141,000 inhabitants), with the palace and park of Sanssouci, the Cecilienhof, and the film studios in Babelsberg. Cottbus (129,000) is the centre of the lignite mining and the textile industry. Brandenburg (93,000) is the oldest city. It acquired its name from the old Slavic fortress of "Brendanburg".

The March of Brandenburg became an independent German territory under Albrecht the Bear (of the Ascanian dynasty) in the 12th century. In 1415 the burgrave, or governor, Frederick VI of Nuremberg became elector of Brandenburg, thus establishing the Hohenzollern dynasty which was to reign for 500 years. Through an inheritance Brandenburg acquired several territories in the west in 1614, and in the east in 1618 the duchy of Prussia (which later became East Prussia). Outstanding rulers were Frederick William, known as the Great Elector (1640-88), King William I, called the "Soldier King" (1713-40) and his son Frederick II, the Great (1740-86). After Frederick became "King in Prussia" in Königsberg on 18 January 1701, "Prussia" became the official name of the state.

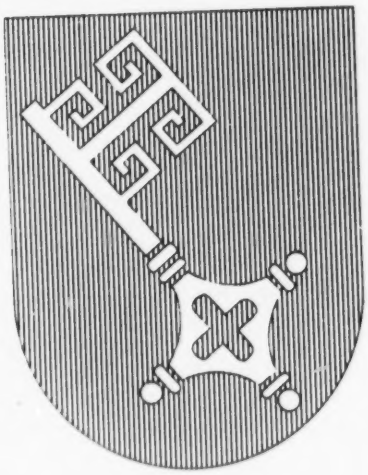
Extensive administrative reforms in 1815 made Brandenburg a province of the larger state of Prussia. In 1920 "Greater Berlin" ceased to be a province of Brandenburg and became an autonomous Prussian region. After the Second World War Brandenburg became part of the Soviet-occupied zone of Germany (later the German Democratic Republic). It no longer included the territory east of the Oder and Neisse rivers and was known as the "Province of the March of Brandenburg" (Mark Brandenburg). When the state of Prussia was

formally dissolved by Law No. 46 enacted by the Allied Control Council on 25 February 1947, its name changed to "Land Mark Brandenburg" until it was replaced in 1952 by the districts of Frankfurt on the Oder, Cottbus and Potsdam. The old name of "Land (state) of Brandenburg" was restored in 1990.

In the rather barren landscape of the north German lowlands, hills of sand and clay alternate with moors, swamps and numerous lakes. Here lived the painters Adolf von Menzel and Max Liebermann, the philosophers Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Eduard Spranger, the scientists Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt, the poet Heinrich von Kleist, the architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel, and the sculptor Johann Gottfried Schadow.

Agriculture in the region focuses on rye, oats and potatoes, and in the lower lying regions dairy farming. The dry sandy soil is ideal for the region's extensive pine forests. Especially lignite is mined in the areas of Niederlausitz and Fürstenberg on the Oder, while Brandenburg, Hennigsdorf, Finow and Eisenhüttenstadt are centres of the iron smelting industry. The textile industry is located in the Guben, Forst and Luckenwalde area and petrochemicals in Schwedt on the Oder. After 40 years of central planning, the region's industries are in a difficult phase of restructuring. Many factories are obsolete and unprofitable. They are also extremely harmful to the environment and therefore have to be thoroughly overhauled. The aim is to make Brandenburg the dynamic, creative and thriving region of old.

Bremen



With an area of 404 square kilometres and a population of about 670,000, Bremen is the smallest federal state, but it is a gateway for the Federal Republic's trade with other countries. The key in its coat of arms, formerly representing the key of St. Peter, the sign used by the archbishops who ruled the region, is now given a modern interpretation: Bremen sees itself as a "key to the world".

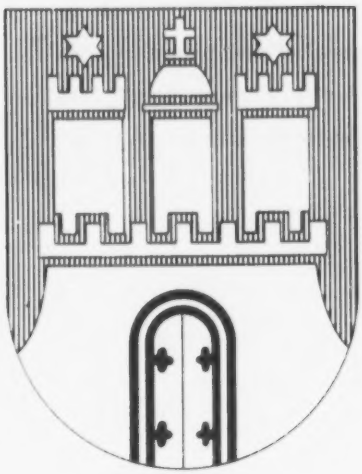
The Free and Hanseatic City of Bremen, which is the city's official name denoting its long seafaring tradition, consists of Bremen (534,000 inhabitants) at the end of the Weser estuary and Bremerhaven (127,000) 60 km downstream. The territory between them belongs to Lower Saxony. Bremen has a long and colourful history. It was made a bishopric in 787 and in 965 was given market rights by the emperor. In the year 1260 the city joined the Hanseatic League, an organization of merchants which eventually embraced more than 90 trading cities, including ports on the North Sea and the Baltic, and others inland. In 1646 Bremen was declared a free imperial city, which meant that it had no regional ruler but was under the direct authority of the emperor. The city's former glory is reflected in the gothic cathedral of St. Peter, completed in 1043, and the town hall next to it, also gothic (1405), which in 1612 was given a decorative Renaissance façade.

Bremen is Germany's second largest port after Hamburg. It is a fast transshipment centre and also the hub of local trade and industry. Much of the country's imported tobacco goes straight to Bremen's cigar and cigarette factories. Coffee beans are roasted and marketed locally. The cornmills, wool-carding and jute-spinning factories, the timberyards, wine importers, warehouses, and of course the docks and counting houses, also testify to the city's importance as a seaport. Car manufacturing, engineering and electronics also feature prominently in Bremen and, more recently, the aerospace industry.

This city-state's government, as in the case of Berlin and Hamburg, is traditionally known as the Senate. The president of the Senate (i.e. head of government) is simultaneously the city's mayor.

(21)

Hamburg



"The Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, being an international seaport, has a special duty to perform on behalf of the German people by virtue of its history and the law of the land. It sees itself acting in a spirit of peace as an intermediary between all continents and nations of the world." This exacting standard form the introduction to Hamburg's constitution adopted in 1952. Hamburg sees itself as one of Germany's gateways to the world, which is the modern interpretation of its coat of arms. It is Germany's biggest seaport and principal trading centre.

Hamburg is simultaneously a city and a federal state, a city-state. It covers an area of 755 square kilometres, including a water surface of 62 square kilometres, and its population numbers 1.6 million. The city parliament still bears the name of the original assembly of citizens entitled to vote, the Buergerschaft. The Senate is the state government and at the same time the city council. The president of the Senate is also the city's first mayor but he cannot lay down policy guidelines for the senators (equivalent to cabinet ministers). He is primus inter pares, that is, first in a group whose members have equal rank. Another Hamburg peculiarity is that its senators, judges and civil servants are not allowed to accept decorations.

Hamburg's history dates back to the 9th century when a castle was built on the Elbe to defend the city's boundaries. But Hamburg owes its growth and fame to the shipping industry and international trade. It was one of the original members of the Hanseatic League in the 13th century, and in the 16th century, following many setbacks, became the most powerful member of this organization of trading cities in the region encompassing the North Sea and the Baltic. Hamburg managed to keep itself out of reach of the emperor and the King of Denmark. Though situated over 100 kilometres from the North Sea, it developed into Germany's principal seaport. It has Europe's largest single container handling facility which is considered one of the fastest in the world.

Near the docks are a mass of factories and warehouses, etc. handling products ranging from grain, rubber, chemicals, margarine, oil, canned foods, cocoa and cigarettes. This Hanseatic city is also important for banking, insurance and services. Hamburg is the hub of the Federal Republic's media and film industry, and with more than 20 theatres, various museums, art galleries and exhibitions, it can rightly claim to be an international cultural centre.

Hesse

Hesse can be appropriately called a "state of the centre", and not only geographically for its economic and social structure reflect by and large the average conditions to be found in the Federal Republic of Germany.

It covers an area of 21,114 square kilometres and its population numbers 5.6 million. It has three counties, five county boroughs, 21 rural districts and some 430 local authorities. Cities with over 100,000 inhabitants are Frankfurt on the Main (623,700), Wiesbaden, the state capital (253,400), Kassel (188,200), Darmstadt (153,300) and Offenbach on the Main (111,900).

Hesse has a varied landscape ranging from river valleys and depressions to low-topped mountainous regions. Agriculture and forestry together account for about six per cent of the region's workforce. The main crops are sugar-beet, vegetables, fruit, wine, tobacco and, in the hilly regions, rye, barley, oats and potatoes. Almost two fifths of the state is wooded, a larger proportion than in any other federal state.

Manufacturing plays a more important role, however. Its focal point is the Rhine-Main area around Frankfurt, the second largest German industrial agglomeration after the Ruhr in North-Rhine/Westphalia. The principal branches of industry are chemicals (Darmstadt, Frankfurt-Hoechst), cars (Ruesselsheim, Kassel), leather (Offenbach), optical instruments (Wetzlar), electronics and engineering.

Frankfurt on the Main, birthplace of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, is Germany's banking and financial centre, being the headquarter of the Federal Bank and the country's principal stock exchange. It is the venue for major industrial fairs and a European focal point for air traffic.

Hesse's present boundaries were drawn after the Second World War, but in contrast to other reorganized states it is not an artificial product. Indeed, for the first time in history areas with a common ethnic, historical, cultural and social identity have been drawn together into one political entity.

Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

A region of islands, lakes, castles and farmsteads, the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania covers an area of 26,700 square kilometres. This thinly populated coastal area on the Baltic Sea has about 2.1 million inhabitants. Its large islands are Rügen (926 square kilometres), and Usedom (445 square kilometres), a third of which belongs to Poland. The Mecklenburger Seenplatte with its 650 lakes and Baltic Sea coastline is one of the largest recreation areas in Germany. Its seaside resorts range from Lübeck Bight via Heiligendamm, the first German seaside resort founded in 1793, to Ahlbeck in the East. The state's largest city is Rostock (250,000), where the first university in Northern Europe was founded in 1419. The state capital is Schwerin (130,000) with its famous Schlossinsel (castle island). In Neubrandenburg (85,000) the 2.3 km-long city wall testifies to the long history of this centre of crafts and commerce, which dates back to 1248. Stralsund (75,000) has been linked with the island of Rügen by a causeway built in 1936. Greifswald (65,000), which lies in the Western Pomeranian part of the state, has one of the oldest universities in Germany, founded in 1456. Wismar (59,000) is the second largest port after Rostock.

The name Mecklenburg probably derives from the Slavic word "Mikilinborg" (large castle). Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony, conquered parts of this region about 1160. In the late Middle Ages the estate was split up among various rulers, including Danes. From 1621 the region was divided into Mecklenburg-Güstrow, which as from 1701 was named Mecklenburg-Strelitz after the new ducal family, and Mecklenburg-Schwerin. Both these states became grand duchies in 1815. In 1867 they became member states of the North German Confederation, and in 1871 of the German Reich. From 1919 they were free states of the Weimar Republic. In 1934 they were merged to form one Mecklenburg.

(27)

Pomerania, from the Slavic "Pomorje" (coastland), like Mecklenburg, was an area populated by Slavs around AD 600. In 1181 the region, under Polish rule, became a duchy immediately attached to the Reich. The river Oder divides Pomerania into Western Pomerania and Eastern Pomerania. In 1648 Western Pomerania was ceded to Sweden under the Peace of Westphalia, while Eastern Pomerania went to Brandenburg-Prussia, which had inheritance claims to the territory since 1529. In 1720 Brandenburg-Prussia also received the Oder estuary and in 1815 the rest of Western Pomerania which, in 1814, had temporarily belonged to Denmark. Stettin became the capital of the Prussian province of Pomerania.

In 1945 the smaller portion of Western Pomerania, together with Stettin and the Oder estuary, were placed under Polish administration, while the larger part of the region was merged with Mecklenburg to form the new state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania on the orders of the Soviet Military Administration. When Prussia was formally dissolved in 1947 the word "Western Pomerania" was deleted from the name. In 1952 this state, like all the other states (Länder) in the German Democratic Republic, were dissolved. In 1990 they were restored with the old name of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

The former rulers, the wealthy merchants and the big landowners left behind many splendid buildings. Among the most outstanding renaissance structures in northern Germany is the Palace of Güstrow, which was completed in 1558. Another attraction is the brick gothic architecture of the town-halls, churches and town gates of the Hanseatic cities. Among the famous sons of this region are the artist Caspar David Friedrich, the dialect poet Fritz Reuter, the writer Ernst Moritz Arndt, the archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann, as well as Johann Heinrich Voss, who translated Homer's poems, and the aviation pioneer Otto Lilienthal. Ernst Barlach sculptured many of his famous works in Güstrow.

This region, though primarily agricultural, has also developed a shipping industry which, since Germany's unification, is having to measure up to international competition. It is undergoing a thorough structural change. Since the landscape is largely untouched, tourism can become an important economic factor despite strict environmental legislation. The region is also a gateway to the markets of Eastern and North Eastern Europe and aims to base its economic recovery on the food, computer, telecommunications and electronics industries.

Lower Saxony

In their state anthem the people of this region say they can "withstand the furious storm" and are "rooted in the native soil". The name Lower Saxony was first mentioned in official documents in 1354, but the present state of the same name did not emerge until 1946, when formerly autonomous areas were merged with the Prussian province of Hanover. Under its former status as a duchy, Hanover was from 1714 to 1837 linked to England by virtue of the fact that the English kings of that period came from the house of Hanover.

With a population of 7.2 million in an area of 47,000 square kilometres, Lower Saxony is the most thinly populated state. It consists of four counties, nine county boroughs, 38 rural districts and about 1,000 local authorities. Cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants are the capital Hanover (497,200), Brunswick (252,900), Osnabrueck (151,200), Oldenburg (140,400), Goettingen (117,100), Wolfsburg (125,400), Salzgitter (11 1,400) and Hildesheim (103,200).

The arts and science have a long tradition in Lower Saxony. A world-famous landmark is the Georg August University of Goettingen. The Wolfenbuettel Library, known for its association with Lessing the poet, has developed into a European centre of classical research.

Lower Saxony has a varied landscape. Part of it is on the North Sea coast, another part is in the North German Plain, and yet another in the central uplands. The Harz mountain range, with its romantic valleys and bizarre cliffs, its extensive forests and lakes, is a major tourist region, as is the totally different insular and coastal landscape along the North Sea. Also popular with holiday-makers all year round is the Lueneburg Heath with its sandy soil and barren landscape of heather, juniper, birch and pine trees.

At first sight Lower Saxony creates the impression of being an agricultural region. And it is true that it is a major cattle-breeding centre and producer of potato seed and cereals. The leaping horse in the state's coat of arms still

symbolizes another important sector of the economy, horse-breeding. For 200 years it has been the home of the famous Hanover breed which are among the world's best for dressage and show-jumping.

But Lower Saxony has grown more and more into an industrial region. This state's economy also benefits from the rock salt and potassium salt in the foothills of the Harz mountains, and from Germany's largest iron ore deposits near Salzgitter and Brunswick. Other important industries in the region are automobiles (the Volkswagen cars are manufactured in Wolfsburg), as well as oil-refining and chemicals in the coastal area around Wilhelmshaven. And to complete the picture, of course, there is the internationally famous Hanover Fair.

North-Rhine/Westphalia

When they hear the name North-Rhine/Westphalia most Germans immediately think of the Ruhr district. Whilst it is true that much does revolve around this mining and engineering area, the largest industrial agglomeration on the continent, North-Rhine/Westphalia is more. It is a region of such variety that it does not fit into any standard pattern.

It did not acquire its present political status until 1946, when the United Kingdom, whose forces occupied the area at the time, integrated the former Prussian provinces of Rhineland (northern part) and Westphalia. In 1947 they added the until then autonomous small state of Lippe. North-Rhine/Westphalia has 17.1 million people, far more than any other state, and since it covers an area of only 34,070 square kilometres it is also the most densely populated region (average number of inhabitants per square kilometre 502, in the crowded Ruhr district more than 2,000). It has five counties, 23 county boroughs, 31 rural districts and some 390 local authorities. The small number of municipalities is a result of drastic administrative reforms.

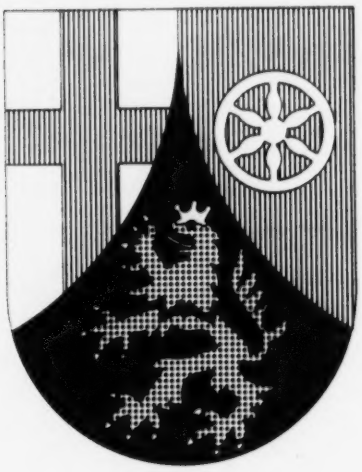
Of the 71 cities in the Federal Republic of Germany with more than 100,000 inhabitants, 30 are situated in North-Rhine/Westphalia. The ten largest of these are Cologne (934,400), Essen (620,000), Dortmund (584,600), Duesseldorf, the capital, (564,400), Duisburg (525,100), Bochum (386,900), Bielefeld (309,000), Gelsenkirchen (286,700), Bonn (297,700) and Muenster (246,700).

It was the rich coal deposits that led to the dynamic growth of the area between Rhine, Ruhr and Lippe in the 19th century. They supplied the energy with which local iron ore was smelted. The pits, furnaces and factories attracted people from all over Germany, even from Poland. The Ruhr became a melting pot - for metal and, in the figurative sense, for people.

As the Ruhr district was heavily dependent upon coal and steel, its industries were vulnerable in times of crisis. The oil boom ushered in the decline of coal. The process of structural change in the coalmining industry, which has been intensified through government subsidy over the past thirty years, continues to this day. In the meantime new branches of industry have emerged. Moreover, the area's appearance is changing as a result of measures to protect the environment. Now most of the smoke and soot have gone.

But North-Rhine/Westphalia does not derive its economic strength entirely from the Ruhr. In the area around Cologne lignite is mined, and textiles, cars, chemicals, engineering, electronics, cosmetics and confectionary are still being produced in the traditional areas. The state capital of Duesseldorf is not only the hub of government and parliament but also a business centre. It is known as "the desk of the Ruhr" and also hosts the world of haute couture and various industrial fairs. Apart from its scenic attractions the region can boast of the architectural and artistic treasures of Cologne, Aachen, Muenster and Bonn, the Federal Republic's provisional capital since 1949 and Beethoven's birthplace.

Rhineland-Palatinate



Rhineland-Palatinate was called a "test-tube" state because it was literally patched together in 1946, on the orders of the French who occupied the region at the time. It was formed out of former Prussian, Bavarian, Oldenburg and Hessian territories. There was hardly any industry and the land was barren and fragmented, so that the predominantly farming community could just about produce enough for their own needs.

The population numbers 3.7 million in an area of 19,849 square kilometres. The state of Rhineland-Palatinate comprises three counties, 12 county boroughs, 24 rural districts and about 2,300 local authorities. Cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants are Mainz, the state capital (173,700), Ludwigshafen on the Rhine (158,000) and Koblenz (107,400).

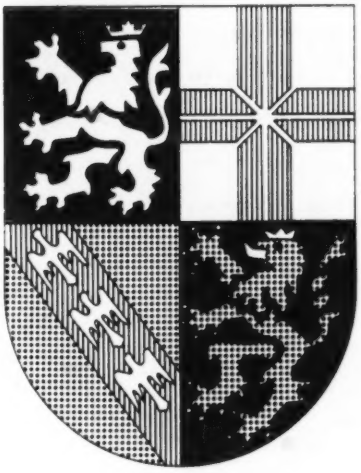
Up to 1945, the region had been a backwater of the German economy and when the new state was formed local industry suffered as a result of wartime destruction and the fact that old trade and communication links had been severed. But regional growth was given a boost when the European Economic Community was founded in 1957. As a result of this development Rhineland-Palatinate found itself at the heart of the Community.

The proportion of the population engaged in farming and forestry decreased rapidly as a result of the fact that many new jobs had been created in industry, the retail trade and transport, as well as the service sector. The region's main industry is chemicals (around Ludwigshafen and Mainz). Engineering, too, has made rapid progress and there are the shoe, brick-making and cement industries, which are for the most part based on local raw materials. Other important branches are timber and printing, textiles and clothing. There are also numerous foundries and, of course, the famous precious stones and jewelry industry around Idar-Oberstein. The region also has numerous breweries, distilleries and mineral-water springs. In spite of the region's rapid economic growth, most companies fall into the medium-size

category in keeping with the local tradition. Small trades and crafts have also managed to hold their own. Two thirds of the total wine-growing area of the Federal Republic of Germany is in Rhineland-Palatinate. Most of the vineyards are to be found along the Rhine and the Moselle, the Ahr and the Nahe.

The state of Rhineland-Palatinate embraces part of the oldest cultural landscape in central Europe. Trier, the birthplace of Karl Marx, claims to be the oldest city in Germany. The Romans found a Celtic settlement there when, 2,000 years ago, they established one of their staging posts in Germania. The state has made great efforts to preserve these outstanding monuments to the nation's cultural evolution.

Saarland



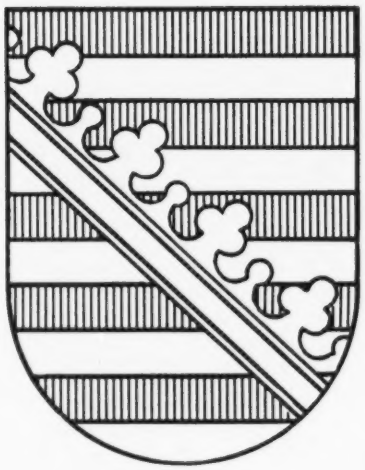
The Saarland suffered more than any other German territory as a result of the former enmity between Germany and France. It was always a bone of contention between the two countries. After the Second World War it was separated from Germany and formed a customs and currency union with France. In 1955, however, a referendum was carried out in agreement with France, as a result of which the Saarland was reincorporated on 1 january 1957 as a state of the Federal Republic of Germany. The customs and currency union with France continued until 5 July 1959. The Saarland has an area of 2,570 square kilometres and a population of 1.06 million. Its administrative subdivisions are the city of Saarbruecken and five urban districts consisting of 50 local authorities. The region's only major city is the capital Saarbruecken with 188,200 inhabitants.

This state derives its wealth from its coal deposits, which have indeed determined its political development. Coal has always been used to smelt imported iron ore and is the basis of the iron and steel industry. Other branches moved to the area, e.g. steel construction and machinery, cable and pipes, glass, textiles, shoes, cement, ceramics, paper and timber, thus making the Saarland the highly industrialized region it is today. Coal and steel have been downgraded over the years in favour of these other branches of industry in order to have a more evenly balanced and less crisis-prone economy.

In spite of industrialization the Saarland still has a great deal to offer in the way of nature reserves and recreational areas, and other leisure-time pursuits have been facilitated by dams which have formed artificial lakes. Approximately one third of the state's total area is wooded, the main tree species being beech. Many people in the mining and industrial community still work their own fields or run small farms.

The Saarland maintains good relations with its neighbours, France and Luxembourg. Saarbruecken, the capital, apart from its importance as a university town and as a popular centre for congresses and industrial fairs, also has a Franco-German grammar school which serves as a model for both countries. French is the first foreign language taught at secondary schools in the region, and the Saarland broadcasting network has regular listeners across the borders, in the same way that French and Luxembourg programmes also cater for their neighbours in the Saarland.

Saxony



The name of the Free State of Saxony, like that of Bavaria, makes this region stand out from the other states in the Federal Republic of Germany and emphasizes its republican identity. 4.9 million people live in this densely populated region comprising 17,700 square kilometres. Saxony borders on Poland and Czechoslovakia. Its main river is the Elbe, which flows through the state from south-east to north-west. Its distinctive physical features are the Elbsandsteingebirge, the Erzgebirge, the Vogtland, the Lausitzer Bergland and the Leipziger Tieflandsbucht. The largest city is Leipzig (530,000 inhabitants), famous for its international trade fairs and as a centre for the publishing and fur trades. The capital is Dresden (500,000), which was popularly known as "Florence on the Elbe" on account of its wonderful baroque architecture, until it was reduced to rubble during bomb attacks on 14 February 1945. The city's reconstructed historic buildings are once again a major attraction. Chemnitz (which from 1953 to 1990 bore the name of Karl-Marx-Stadt) was known as "Saxony's Manchester" in the 19th century on account of its textile industry. It now has 301,000 inhabitants. Other major cities are the cloth-making town of Plauen (74,000), Hoyerswerda (67,900), and Freiberg (50,000), an old mining town with a well-known mining college. Bautzen (52,000) in the Oberlausitz area is a cultural centre of the Sorbs, a western Slavic people who enjoy cultural autonomy in the Spreewald (in the state of Brandenburg) and in the Lausitzer Bergland. Meissen (45,000) has been the location of the world-famous porcelain manufactury since 1710.

In 1423 Saxony was given the title of duchy and made an electorate. From then on its rulers, the house of Wettin, were among the strongest political forces in the Reich. In 1485 the elector Ernst and his brother Albert divided the region, with the result that one refers to the "Ernestine" and the "Albertine" lines. In 1547 the designation electorate passed from the Ernestines

to the Albertines, who constantly enlarged their territory (the areas around Dresden and Leipzig), whereas all that remained in the possession of the Ernestines was Thuringia, which was fragmented by partitions of the estate. The Albertine electorate of Saxony (with the court residing in Dresden) enjoyed its most flourishing period under August I (August the Strong) who reigned from 1694 to 1733 and in 1697 acquired the Polish throne which he and his son held until 1763. Saxony then become overshadowed by Prussia through always siding with the losers (in the Seven Years War (1756-63), in the Liberation Wars against Napoleon in 1813, and in the Prussian-Austrian War of 1866). At the Congress of Vienna (1815) Saxony, which had become a kingdom in 1806, was forced to cede the northern half of its territory with nearly half of its population to Prussia. In 1919 the remaining part of the kingdom became a republic with the title of Free State of Saxony.

After the Second World War the Silesian area of Oberlausitz, which had remained a part of Germany, was attached to Saxony. Like all the other states in the territory of the former German Democratic Republic, Saxony was dissolved in 1952 and reestablished in 1990.

Saxony was always one of Germany's main industrial areas. In the Middle Ages silver mining in the Erzgebirge was the source of the region's prosperity. But Saxony also has some of the large lignite deposits in the Leipzig area as well as the pitcoal mined around Zwickau. After the Second World War ore-mining in the Erzgebirge (uranium, wolfram, bismuth, and zinc) was revived at the instigation of the Soviet Union. Owing to the fact that this region's natural ressources were ruthlessly exploited, it is now suffering under tremendous environmental problems. Lignite mining and the burning of this highly sulphurous fuel has made large areas desolate, eroded buildings and destroyed forests. The mining of uranium around Wismut has produced radioactive sites which can only be rehabilitated at tremendous cost.

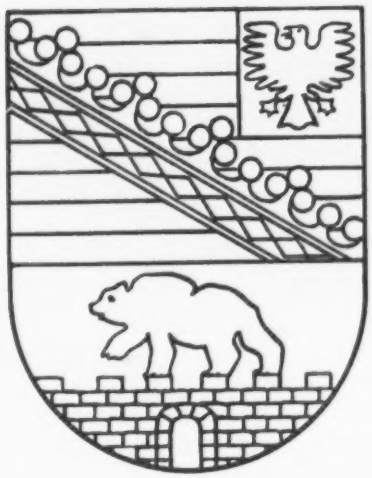
The traditional and largest branches of industry are mechanical engineering, precision tools and optical instruments, textiles, chemicals and motor vehicles. Under the old regime Dresden was branching out into electronics with the "Robotron" combine, but since Germany's unification it is having to face new

challenges under world market conditions. Toy manufacturing has a long tradition in the Erzgebirge. Musical instruments from this area are also well-known. Most farming is concentrated in the northern part, where the fertile soil is good for wheat and sugarbeat production. There is considerable market gardening in the Elbe valley between Pirna and Meissen, where the climate is particularly favourable. In some areas wine growing is also possible. The state has many cultural treasures and traditions. Dresden's Staatsoper, Schauspiel and Kreuzchor, as well as the many museums and art galleries, enjoy international fame, as do the Gewandhaus, the Thoman Chor and the Städtisches Theater in Leipzig.

Owing to its early industrialization, Saxony became a stronghold of the labour movement. In 1863, Ferdinand Lasalle founded the Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterverein in Leipzig, from which emerged the Social Democratic Party of Germany. August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht were politically active in Saxony.

In more recent times Leipzig has been a focal point of the protest movement which ultimately led the downfall of the SED regime in the German Democratic Republic. Since 1981, Leipzig's Nikolai-Kirche has been the scene of prayers for peace, which in 1989 developed into the Monday demonstrations during which the people chanted with great effect: "We are the people!"

Saxony-Anhalt



Of the federal states in the territory of the former German Democratic Republic, Saxony-Anhalt has the shortest history as a political entity. It only existed from 1945 to 1952. In 1945 the Soviet military administration created a province of Saxony, which for the most part consisted of the former Prussian province of Saxony (as from 1 July 1944 divided into the province of Magdeburg and the province of Halle-Merseburg) and Anhalt, which until 1945 was an autonomous state. After the state elections of 1946 it was renamed the province of Saxony-Anhalt and then, after the dissolution of Prussia in 1947, Saxony-Anhalt until 1952, when the federal system was abolished and the region was again divided up into the districts of Magdeburg and Halle.

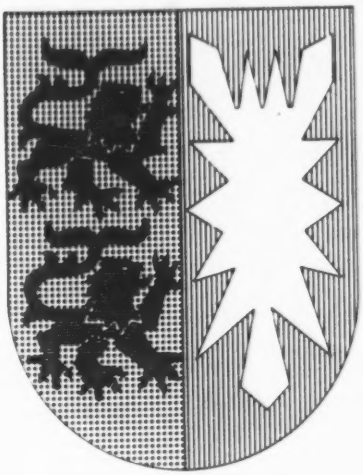
The outstanding physical features of this area between the Elbe and Havel, the Unstrut and Elster, are the lowlands of the Altmark and the Magdeburger Börde, the hilly Fläming region, the steep Harz mountains and the flat area around Leipzig. Halle, with a population of 321,000, is the largest city, followed by the capital Magdeburg (288,400), Dessau (101,000), Luther's town of Wittenberg (54,000), Stendal in the Altmark (50,000) and Wernigerode, the "colourful town in the Harz" (36,000). In all, Saxony-Anhalt has just under three million inhabitants in an area of 20,300 square kilometres.

This state is rich in cultural tradition. There are the Romanesque monastery of Jerichow and the Stiftskirche at Quedlinburg. The cathedrals of Halberstadt, Magdeburg and Halle are among the outstanding legacies of medieval architecture. They are at the same time a manifestation of religious history in this former Germanic-Slavic frontier area. The Naumburg cathedral, the construction of which was begun in 1210, contains the statues of Uta and Ekkehard, two of the most impressive pieces of sculpture in German history. The Wörlitz park near Dessau is one of the great gardens of Europe. Part of the region's cultural heritage is the "Sachsenspiegel", the most significant lawbook of the Middle Ages which was written by Eike von Repgow at

Burg Falkenstein am Harz. Marthin Luther, who was born in Eisleben, made history when he nailed his 95 theses to the door of the castle church at Wittenberg (at that time part of Saxony) on 31 October 1517 and started the Reformation. Many great musicians were born in today's Saxony-Anhalt: George Frederick Handel was born in Halle, Georg Philipp Telemann in Magdeburg, and Kurt Weill in Dessau. The "founder" of the German Empire in 1871, Otto von Bismarck, was born in Schönhausen near Magdeburg. And the Bauhaus, having moved from Weimar to Dessau in 1925, gained worldwide influence on architecture, painting and design under Walter Gropius. This was the school of architecture which sought unity of art and technology.

The excellent quality of the soil, especially in the Magdeburger Börde, ensured rich crops of sugarbeat and wheat even before the introduction of artificial fertilizer. From the time the sugar exchange was established in 1886, Magdeburg was the centre of the German sugar trade. The less fertile soil produces potatoes, rye and oats. Animal breeding is one of the main industries in the low-lying river areas, forestry principally in the Harz and Fläming hill regions. Deposits of copper slate, lignite, rock salt and potassium salt, limestone and other products mined for industrial purposes have made the former district of Halle in particular a major centre for chemicals, building materials and metallurgy. But Halle, Wolfen, Weissenfels, Zeitz, Leuna and Bitterfeld, like Magdeburg with its heavy engineering, are now emergency areas on account of their obsolete factories and massive ecological problems.

Schleswig-Holstein



Schleswig-Holstein, the state situated between the North Sea and the Baltic, is often called the "bridge to the North". Indeed until Germany became united nearly all the traffic between the Federal Republic and Scandinavia used the roads, rails and ports of Schleswig-Holstein. The region also has many sea routes to Eastern Europe, but now has competititon from the Baltic ports of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

It has a population of 2.6 million in an area of 16,000 square kilometres. The coastline is over 500 kilometres long (including the islands 920 kilometres). The stretch of border shared with Denmark is only 67 kilometres long.

Schleswig-Holstein has four county boroughs, eleven rural districts and about 1,100 local authorities. Cities with over 100,000 inhabitants are the state capital Kiel (239,200) and Luebeck (210,400), the birthplace of Thomas Mann (1875-1955), who described this former "Queen of the Hanseatic League" in his novels.

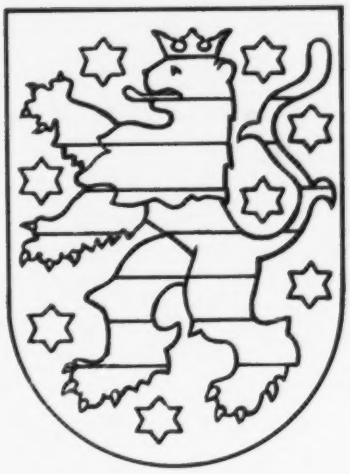
Schleswig-Holstein is a very flat region with three distinct zones. In the west is the Marsch, which consists of a fertile, almost treeless arable and pasture area and coastal flats. There are hardly any ports in this area. Off the coast is the chain of North Frisian islands. East of the Marsch is the Geest, a moorland area, and yet further east an undulating, fertile landscape with many lakes. The Baltic coast in this area has many indentations, such as the Luebeck Bight and the Kiel and Flensburg Foerde.

The sea plays a prominent part in the life of the community. Defending the west coast against the storm-tides of the North Sea is an extremely costly undertaking. On the Baltic Sea are many important trade, ferry and naval ports, as well as the locations of well-known shipbuilding industries. The Kiel Canal connecting the North Sea with the Baltic is the most heavily travelled stretch of navigable water in the world.

Yachting is the most popular pastime in this area. Kiel has twice played host to the yachting events of the Olympic Games, in 1936 and 1972. Kiel Week is a world-famous annual regatta which is also accompanied by an outstanding cultural programme.

Although Schleswig-Holstein long had a primarily agricultural basis, farming today accounts for only 7 per cent of its domestic product. Today, one third of its income is generated by industry and trade. Government incentives have attracted electronic and precision-machine companies to the region, which now complement the traditional shipbuilding industry. With over 30 million overnights in hotels, private homes and at camping sites, tourism is an important economic factor in this region between the oceans which has retained most of its natural character.

Thuringia



Thuringia has always been known as the "green heartland of Germany". One third of its 15,200 square kilometres is covered with forest. It is located in the centre of Germany and shares borders with no less than five other federal states. Its population is approximately 2.5 million. Its major cities are the capital Erfurt (217,000 inhabitants), Gera (132,300), Jena (106,000), Weimar (61,600), Gotha (56,700), Suhl (56,000), Altenburg (51,400) and Eisenach (51,000).

The central area is the Thuringian Basin with its extremely fertile soil (producing wheat and sugarbeat and, around Erfurt, flowers, seed and vegetables). In the southern part of the state, running from north-west to south-east, is the narrow central upland ridge of the Thuringian Forest with its famous Rennsteig. This highland route, 168.3 kilometres long, was referred to in official documents as "Rynnestig" from as early as 1330. It was used by migrant peoples, traders and couriers in the Middle Ages. In the west the plateau of the Meininger Land rises to form the thickly forested area of the Kuppenrhön.

Thuringia became famous for the optical firm of Karl Zeiss in Jena, the Schottschen Glassworks (Jena glass) and the automobile factories of Eisenach (which produced the legendary "Dixi" in 1904 and, when East Germany was the German Democratic Republic, the "Wartburg"). Toys from this region became internationally famous. In former times they were mostly made at home (there is a toy museum in Sonneberg). Among high-quality products of Thuringia are precision parts for space research, laser technology, and the first megabit chip manufactured in the former German Democratic Republic. The vigorous restructuring process since the unification of Germany offers Thuringia good medium-term prospects for its engineering and automobile companies, as well as for microelectronics, the ceramics industry and technology associated with environmental protection. In addition, tourism, which has

always featured prominently in the region, is to be further developed. The region also has problems to cope with in the form of potash mining in the south of the Harz mountains and the Werra valley, and uranium mining which have left heavily contaminated sites which will cost huge sums to remove.

Historically, this state has its roots in the kingdom of Thuringia which existed from AD 400 to 531 between the Harz mountains and the river Main until it was fragmented by Franconian and Saxon armies. In medieval times it was ruled by the Thuringian landgraves (from 1130 to 1247). In subsequent centuries the area was increasingly split up into tiny principalities.

The German Empire of 1871 included in the territory of today's Thuringia eight independent principalities. In November 1918 their regents abdicated. By means of a plebiscite held in 1920, Coburg became a part of Bavaria. The other seven states likewise held plebiscites on 1 May 1920 and formed the Free State of Thuringia with Weimar as its capital. The eighth silver star in the state's present coat of arms stands for the Prussian county of Erfurt, which was added to Thuringia on 1 July 1944.

After Germany's collapse in 1945, the state was reestablished in 1946 (the capital being at first Weimar then, from 1948, Erfurt) and belonged to the territory of the German Democratic Republic which was created in 1949. It retained this status until 1952, when all the states in that part of Germany were dissolved and replaced by districts. In 1990 Thuringia, like the other former states, was reinstated and has been a federal state since 3 October 1990.

This region in central Germany has made many outstanding contributions to Germany's cultural and political development. It was in the Wartburg castle near Eisenach that Martin Luther found asylum in 1521 and began to translate the Bible. This was a step of epochal significance in the development of high German as a written language. In 1817 student associations organized the "Wartburg Festival" as a demonstration for German unity. At the end of the 18th and in the early 19th century, the grand duke's court in Weimar was the home of German classical literature. Here lived Goethe, Schiller, Wieland and Herder, and here they met other great men of their times. In

1919 Weimar became the venue of the constituent national assembly and gave its name to the Weimar Constitution and the Weimar Republic. Many theatres, opera houses, art collections and museums in the other former capitals of this region still vouch for the love of art and patronage of former times.

Thuringia also provided considerable stimulus for the labour movement. Eisenach is where the Social Democratic of Germany was founded in 1869, and in Erfurt and Gotha party conferences were held which considerably influenced the party's future course.

Less well-known generally but familiar to lovers of Skat (a card game) all over the world is Altenburg. Skat was invented there between 1810 and 1817, and there still exists a "Skat Court", which discusses any doubts about the rules of the game put to it by experts and makes unanimous "judgements".

(IN-Press)

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